



## US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

4 February 2005

### Health Information Operations Weekly Update



The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## HOT TOPICS

### Chirac Calls for International Tax to Combat AIDS

26 January – Health Day News reported that French President Jacques Chirac is proposing an "experimental" international tax to help finance the global fight against [AIDS](#). The tax could be placed on international financial transactions, airline tickets and aviation and maritime fuels, Chirac said. At least \$10 billion each is needed to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, Chirac added. He noted that, despite major efforts to date, "we are failing in the face of this terrible pandemic." [View Article](#)

### Doctors Make Eye Cells See Light

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### **Eighth Annual Force Health Protection Conference**

[Conference Home](#)

### **What is the Force Health Protection Conference?**

The theme for the 2005 Conference is **"Force Health Protection – Future Force Enabler."** Our conference mission is to advance technology, to better sustain the soldier in garrison or during deployments that may involve Weapons of Mass Destruction, to provide information of benefit to first responders, and to bolster everyday response capabilities. Our primary focus is the soldier.

### **Who hosts the FHP Conference?**

London teamed up with colleagues at the University of Manchester to study a protein, melanopsin. Activating melanopsin in cells that do not normally use it made them sensitive to light. The discovery might also help treat people who get depressed as the nights draw in. The retina contains cells known as photoreceptors that interpret light levels to allow us to see. Much human blindness is due to diseases of the retina, such as retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration, in which the photoreceptors are destroyed. Currently there is no cure for such diseases, and once sight is lost it cannot be recovered. [View Article](#)

## Gates Gives \$750 Million for Vaccines

25 January – CNN reported that a campaign to get life-saving vaccines to millions of children in poor countries received a \$1 billion cash boost from Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates and the government of Norway. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation said it was giving \$750 million to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), while Norway promised \$290 million. The donors hope it will kick start other pledges. More than 2 million people in poor countries die each year because they have not received immunizations that are taken for granted in the industrialized world. GAVI will use the new funds to improve immunization services needed to deliver basic vaccines, such as those against diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and TB. [View Article](#)

## Hormone Shots Could Prevent 10,000 Premature Births

31 January – Forbes reported that using progesterone therapy to prevent [preterm labor](#) shows tremendous promise, at least among women at high risk for delivering prematurely. If all high-risk women had received the injections in 2002, it would have cut the nation's preterm birth rate by 2 percent that year. "That translates to about 10,000 preterm births prevented, so we feel optimistic," said study author Joann R. Petrini, director of the March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center. The treatment involves receiving weekly injections of 17 alpha-hydroxyprogesterone caproate, a derivative of the hormone [progesterone](#). The new analysis is based on criteria from an earlier randomized controlled trial that showed a 33 percent reduction in preterm births among women with a history of spontaneous -- meaning unexplained or unintended -- preterm birth who got weekly injections of 17P. [View Article](#)

## Keep Smoking Or Keep My Job?

The Conference is hosted by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, a subordinate command of the U.S. Army Medical Command.

### **Who should attend the FHP Conference?**

Last year, over 1500 individuals attended the Force Health Protection Conference. We had over 90 exhibitors, more than 80 poster presentations, and over 400 technical presentations. We expect 2005 to be another exceptional year for the Force Health Protection Conference. Military, Veterans Administration professionals, DoD civilian professionals, and security professionals, and educators working in the areas of environmental health, occupational and preventive medicine, health promotion and wellness, population health, and behavioral health should plan to attend this event.

31 January – Market Watch reported that Weyco Inc., an employee-benefits administrator decided to eliminate [smokers](#) from its work force by randomly testing them for nicotine in their blood or urine. The zero-tolerance tobacco policy applies to smokers in general, not just those who light up on company time. Weyco had been building up to the ultimatum for several years before four employees who opted not to take the smoking test left the company in January. In early 2003, Weyco quit hiring tobacco users and by fall had forbidden the staff from smoking on the premises. Starting in 2004, the firm added a tobacco "assessment" of \$50 a month per worker who smoked and didn't go to a cessation class. Weyco gave its employees a 15-month advance notice that those who still smoked on or off the company's watch by January 2005 would be terminated. About 20 of Weyco's 200 workers kicked the habit and four quit before the company's mandatory testing last month. [View Article](#)

### Millions Could Die in Bird Flu Outbreak

31 January – The Times of India reported that scientists have sounded a global alert on [avian flu](#) following reports of human-to-human transmission of this virus. Comparing the patterns of avian influenza to the 1918 flu epidemic, scientists said, "The emergence of human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) virus infection in Asia is an unprecedented warning." They urged the world to "put up safeguards while the storm is still gathering." "A virus with the potential to cause a pandemic could emerge suddenly, by way of a single reassortment event, or more gradually, by adaptive mutations during human infections, with the virus incrementally improving its transmissibility," said the scientists. The virus has been getting more lethal. It has increased environmental resistance, and is expanding its mammalian host range. "All prerequisites for the start of a pandemic have been met save one, namely, genetic changes in this virus that would allow it to achieve efficient human-to-human transmission," they said. [View Article](#)

### Politics: Six Million Dying of Aids amid Tsunami Largesse

26 January - AllAfrica.com reported that within three weeks after the tsunami disaster ravaged southeast Asia, the international donor community responded magnanimously by pledging an unprecedented 5.5 billion to 6 billion dollars for emergency relief and reconstruction. By coincidence, says U.N.

Special Envoy Stephen Lewis, the Global Fund on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria received an identical amount of about 5.9 billion dollars in pledges from the donor community. The difference between the two responses is that it took three years - not three weeks -- to raise the same amount of money to combat a disease devastating millions of lives, says Lewis. Jan Egeland, U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, said he would make a "dramatic presentation" to the U.N. Security Council later this week to point out "how we failed in Africa but succeeded in the beaches of Asia". [View Article](#)

## Sunshine May Play a Part in Preventing Cancer

2 February – The Globe and Mail reported that sun exposure can actually prevent cancer and play a role in its treatment. The new study concerns [melanoma](#), a potentially fatal form of skin cancer for which sun exposure is the principal risk factor. It suggests that the more a person is exposed to the sun, the greater their chances of surviving skin cancer. Those with a history of sunburns, on the other hand, were more likely to succumb to skin cancer. A second, unrelated research paper found sun exposure also reduces the risk of developing [non-Hodgkin's lymphoma](#) and [Hodgkin's disease](#), two forms of cancer that start in the lymph nodes. Earlier research has suggested excess sun exposure may play a role in both. The key factor is vitamin D, which the body produces when exposed to sunlight. But the scientists also speculate that sun exposure itself, which is believed to cause DNA damage that can lead to cancerous mutations, may also bolster the body's ability to repair DNA and fend off cancer. [View Article](#)

## Syphilis Rates Not Result of Unsafe Sex

26 January – Forbes.com reported that the epidemic of [syphilis](#) among American gay men may be a product of the natural evolution of the disease, not the result of condom fatigue and more unsafe sex. Statistics from 68 American cities show that syphilis rates go up and down in regular cycles. The researchers suspect the disease loses steam as previously infected people develop temporary immunity, but then recovers a few years later when there are more vulnerable people in the population. The number of syphilis cases in the United States reached almost 7,100 in 2003, the third annual increase in a row. While syphilis is easily cured with drugs, officials have raised an alarm because the disease appears to make it easier to transmit the virus that causes AIDS. [View Article](#)

## Viruses, X-Rays Join List of Cancer Agents

31 January – Reuters reported that viruses, X-rays and compounds found in grilled meats joined the official list of known or suspected cancer-causing agents. The list is issued every two years by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program. "For the first time ever, viruses are listed in the report: [hepatitis B](#) virus, [hepatitis C](#) virus, and some human [papillomaviruses](#) that cause common sexually transmitted diseases," the NIEHS said in a statement. About 1 million U.S. residents are chronically infected with hepatitis B and 3 million with hepatitis C virus, both of which can be transmitted by injected drug use, sexual contact and blood transfusions. An estimated 20 million people in the United States are infected with genital wart viruses, which often produce no symptoms. "Other new listings include lead and lead compounds, X-rays, compounds found in grilled meats, and a host of substances used in textile dyes, paints and inks," the NIEHS said. [View Article](#) [View NIEHS Press Release](#)

## Focus on Epidemiology

### Rapid Health Response, Assessment, and Surveillance after a Tsunami --- Thailand, 2004--2005

28 January – MMWR reported that on December 26, 2004, an earthquake triggered a devastating tsunami that caused an estimated 225,000 deaths in eight countries on two continents. In Thailand, six provinces were impacted. The Thai Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) responded with rapid mobilization of local and nonlocal clinicians, public health practitioners, and medical supplies; assessment of health-care needs; identification of the dead, injured, and missing; and active surveillance of syndromic illness. The MOPH response was augmented by technical assistance from the Thai MOPH--U.S. CDC Collaboration (TUC) and the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS), with support from the office of the World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Thailand. The experiences in Thailand underscore the value of written and rehearsed disaster plans, capacity for rapid mobilization, local coordination of relief activities, and active public health surveillance. [View Report](#)

### DoD-GEIS: Avian Influenza (AI) A (H5N1)

3 February - Recent human cases of AI in Viet Nam (VN) raise



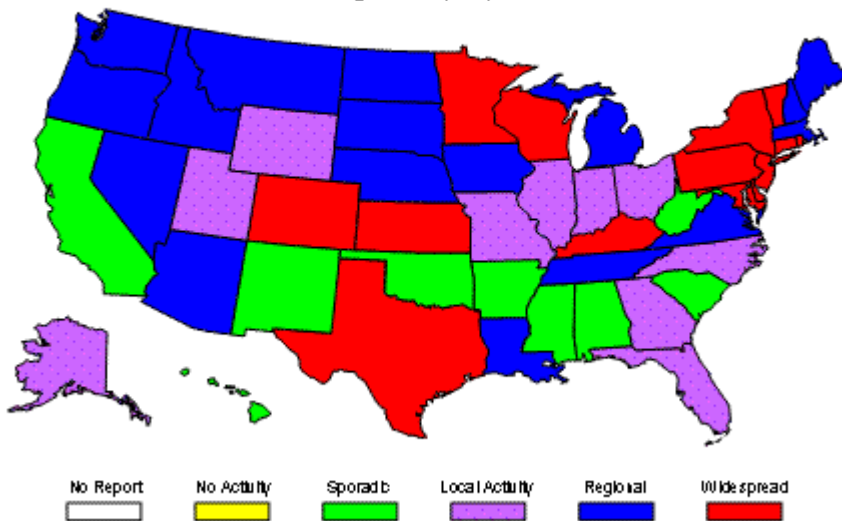
there is no confirmation of this route of transmission in these cases, but also says that it cannot be ruled out); investigation continues. Two cases were recently positive by laboratory tests in VN but WHO is seeking confirmation from the Ministry of Health (MOH). If confirmed by the MOH, these latest two cases will bring the total in Viet Nam reported since mid-December to twelve, nine have been fatal. As of 26JAN05 there have been 54 human cases of AI A (H5N1) in Vietnam and Thailand resulting in 41 deaths. According to WHO late last week, the first newly detected case is a 10-year-old girl from the southern province of Long An who developed symptoms 13JAN05, was hospitalized seven days later, and was in critical condition. The second case is a 13-year-old girl from Dong Thap Province, also in the south whose onset of symptoms was 20JAN05, hospitalized two days later. She was also critically ill. The case from Dong Thap Province is the daughter of a confirmed case announced previously; her 35-year-old mother had onset of symptoms 14JAN05 and died one week later. WHO reports that VN public health authorities are investigating this newly detected family cluster. With the six-day interval between dates of symptom onset in the mother and her child, limited human-to-human transmission, as seen during similar events in the past, cannot be ruled out at this stage. All such clusters of cases, closely related in place and time, require urgent investigation to determine whether the epidemiological behavior of the virus might be changing in ways that could favor the onset of a pandemic. Informative web sites include [CDC](#), [IOM](#) and [WHO](#). Information on Influenza (avian and human) including the DoD Global Influenza Program, WNV, Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

Influenza Update

**[CDC Weekly Influenza Report for Week Ending 22 January – Week 3](#)**

**Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported  
by State & Territorial Epidemiologists**

Week ending January 22, 2005 - Week 3

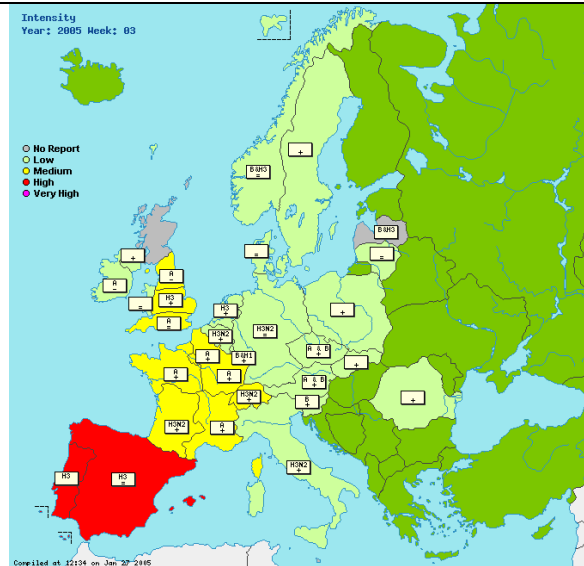


From 16 – 22 January 2005, influenza activity continued to increase in the United States. Five hundred ninety-three (18.5%) specimens tested were positive for influenza viruses. There have been three influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported to CDC this season.

**European Influenza Surveillance Scheme Report for  
Week Ending 23 January – Week 3**

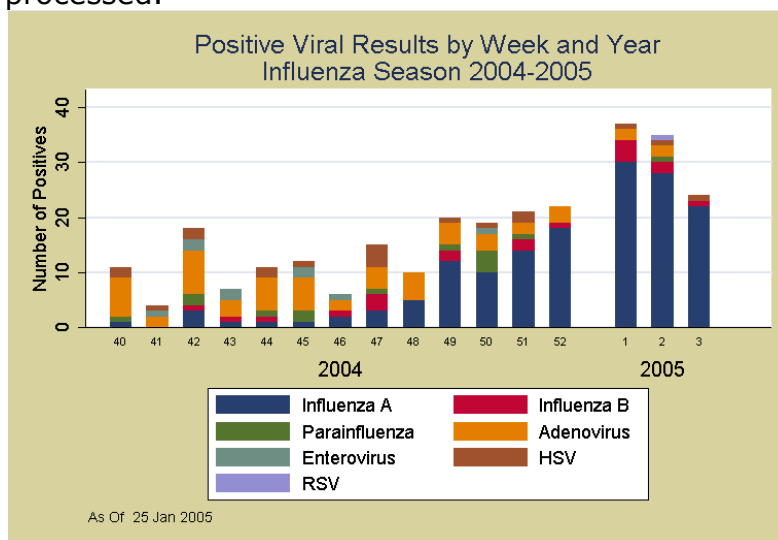
The Iberian Peninsula, Portugal and Spain, is experiencing high levels of influenza activity. While clinical activity did not increase in Spain in week 3, in Portugal a sharp increase in clinical activity was seen between weeks 1 and 3. In both countries, children aged 5-14 were most affected. England, France and Switzerland reported medium clinical influenza activity. The dominant virus in Europe is A(H3) and most of them are A/Wellington/1/2004 (H3N2)-like. The RSV epidemic is coming to an end in seven countries, where it lasted from about week 47 in 2004 to week 3 in 2005.





### **DOD Worldwide Influenza Surveillance Program for Week Ending 22 January – Week 3**

**Influenza-Like Illness** - This graph plots the percentage of weekly outpatient visits at military installations that had an ICD-9 code correlating with Influenza-Like Illness as defined by [ESSENCE](#). Since 3 October 2004, the Epidemiological Surveillance Division (AFIOH/SDE) has processed 987 specimens as part of the influenza surveillance program. Of those specimens, 151 (15%) were positive for influenza A and 19 (2%) were positive for influenza B. In addition, 94 specimens are still being processed.



***Other timely information can be found in:***

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [\*Medical Surveillance Monthly Report\*](#)

This week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [\*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report\*](#)

## **USCENTCOM**

### **Pakistan: Violence against Women Still a Huge Problem**

2 February – IRIN reported that two independent reports on [domestic violence](#) against women in Pakistan have found that the country is suffering increasing levels of abuse in spite of legislation to provide women with protection. 'The State of Human Rights in 2004', the annual report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said that although there is increased awareness of the issue and discussion at both official and non-official levels, little had been achieved. The HRCP found the incidence of physical, sexual or verbal violence against women in the home to be amongst the highest in the world. According to their figures, up to 80 percent of women in the country suffer from such abuse. A second report compiled by the Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid organization recorded some 4,302 cases of violence against women which had been reported in the print media and more than 1,000 cases of sexual abuse, during 2004. [View Article](#)

## **USEUCOM**

### **Anthrax Kills 18 Hippos in Uganda**

31 January – Mail & Guardian reported that [anthrax](#) has killed nearly 20 hippos in a sprawling reserve in southwest Uganda in the past two weeks amid fears of a new outbreak of the deadly disease, which claimed the lives of at least 200 of the animals last year. The carcasses of 18 hippos have been found floating at different locations in the Kazinga Channel in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park, which is home to half of Uganda's 10,000 hippopotami. Local authorities had embarked on a campaign to warn villagers not to scavenge the carcasses as is their practice to prevent the disease from possibly leaping to humans. [View Article](#)

### **DRC: At Least 34 Die in New Cholera Outbreak**

27 January – Reuters reported that at least 34 people have died

from [cholera](#) in areas along Lake Kivu in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Another 2,152 people have been infected in the cholera outbreak, which began in early January, Dr. Guyslain Bisimwa, medical inspector for South Kivu Province, said. "The epidemic continues to advance although we are still waiting for statistics," he said, adding that the Fizi area was the worst affected, with 19 deaths so far. The affected areas included the localities of Mwenga - where 12 deaths had been reported - Uvira, Kabare, Nyangezi, Katudu, Kamituga and the provincial capital, Bukavu. Deputy Governor Kyoto said heavy rains in the province from 2 to 4 January had swept the town's garbage into Lake Kivu, which residents use for drinking as well as washing. [View Article](#)

## Flu Epidemic Threatens Bulgaria

29 January – The Sofia News Agency reported that a [flu](#) epidemic might be declared in some Bulgarian cities within days, Dr. Anguel Kunchev from the ministry's Epidemic Control Department said. Experts are still waiting for the latest data to decide whether it is an epidemic. The most endangered Bulgarian regions are near the cities of Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Stara Zogara and Burgas. An epidemic is declared when over 180 people from 100,000 are sick, Dr. Kunchev explained. [View Article](#)

## 'Mad Cow' Disease Found In Goat

28 January – BBC News reported that a French goat has tested positive for [mad cow disease](#) - the first animal in the world other than a cow to have bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The European Commission (EC) stressed that precautionary measures put in place in recent years to protect the human food chain from



contaminated meats meant there was no need for alarm over the latest finding. The EC now wants to test 200,000 goats in the 25 EU member states over the next six months. The testing would concentrate on countries where cases of BSE have been reported in cattle in the past, including the UK. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

## Campus Reaches Critical Phase in Measles Outbreak

31 January – State Press reported that Arizona State University health officials will recommend this week that 1,173 students be excluded from campus because they have not been vaccinated or supplied proof of immunization against [measles](#). Although ASU cannot enforce its recommendation that undocumented students remain off campus, officials said they hoped students would be responsible. The health center has seen 225 students come in to be immunized in the last two weeks, while 188 students provided documentation, since a man with measles visited campus. Staff is now required to document the immunization or they also will be excluded from campus. [View Article](#)

### FDA Rules on Military's Anthrax Vaccine

1 February – The Hartford Courant reported that the Food and Drug Administration issued an emergency order allowing the military to use a controversial [anthrax vaccine](#). The order, published in the Federal Register, came three months after a federal court stopped the Pentagon from forcing servicemen to be vaccinated or face punishment. The new order permits voluntary use. Nearly 500 active-duty service members have refused the vaccine and more than 100 have been court-martialed. More than 500 pilots and flight crew have retired or transferred from the Air National Guard or Reserve to avoid the vaccine. The adverse reaction rate of the vaccine is 100 times that initially stated by the vaccine's manufacturer. Adverse reactions include immune disorders, muscle and joint pains, headaches, rashes, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, chills and fever. At least a half dozen deaths and a number of birth defects have been attributed to its use. [View Article](#)

### Illinois Unable To Sell Flu Vaccine Bought From Europe

27 January – The Chicago Sun-Times reported that Illinois has been unable to sell any of the 700,000 doses of [flu vaccine](#) that Gov. Rod Blagojevich and other state and city governments agreed to buy from Europe, raising the possibility that taxpayers could get stuck paying millions for the unused vaccine. To make matters worse, officials in New York City and Cleveland, who signed onto the deal to import the vaccine, now say they don't need their share of the doses and don't want to pay for them. Both cities got extra flu doses from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention while Blagojevich waited for permission from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to import the European doses to alleviate a U.S. flu vaccine shortage. Illinois agreed to pay \$2.5 million for its share of 256,000 doses. New Mexico requested about 150,000 of the doses and is still

part of the program. [View Article](#)

## Illness Triggers Half of Bankruptcies

2 February – The Chicago Sun-Times reported that a new Harvard study of bankruptcy cases shows that medical bills and illnesses are a major cause of roughly half of this country's personal bankruptcies. Touted as the first in-depth analysis of medical causes of bankruptcy, the study looked at 1,771 court records of people who filed for bankruptcy in 2001 in five federal districts, including one in Illinois. More than half of those bankruptcy filers were interviewed in detail about their finances and health. The researchers determined that 46.2 percent to 54.5 percent of the nearly 1.5 million personal bankruptcy filings in 2001 could be chalked up, in large part, to medical problems. The study found that the majority of medical bankruptcy filers nationwide were middle-class homeowners with some college education. They usually had health insurance, too. More than 75 percent of people in medical bankruptcy were insured when they first got sick. [View Article](#)

## Montana: Outbreak of Whooping Cough

27 January – The Billings Gazette reported that Billings, MT is the hot spot for an outbreak of [whooping cough](#). Fifty-one cases of the highly contagious ailment - also called pertussis - have been diagnosed this winter in Billings. Jim Murphy, a health specialist in communicable disease surveillance, said a look back at the past few decades shows the 85 confirmed cases throughout the state is the highest number in nearly 40 years. Pertussis numbers are up nationally, according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. Through the end of 2004, 18,957 cases had been reported, up from 10,670 in 2003. The vaccination is not given after age 6, and the immunity gradually wears off by the time a person reaches adolescence. [View Article](#)

## New Clues for Sciatica Pain Relief

31 January – Health Day News reported that for years, damaged discs in the lower back or spinal nerve problems have taken the blame as the most common cause of [sciatica](#), a painful condition in which the sciatic nerve in the back of the leg is pinched and pain radiates down the leg. But a new study suggests the cause of sciatica pain may actually be [piriformis syndrome](#), a condition in which a muscle in the buttocks called the piriformis compresses or irritates the sciatic nerve. Some 232 patients whose symptoms of sciatica had not improved after diagnosis or

treatment for a damaged disc underwent MR neurography, a technique that generates detailed images of nerves. Some 69 percent had piriformis syndrome, while the other 31 percent had some other nerve, joint or muscle condition. To treat piriformis syndrome, the researchers injected a long-acting anesthetic into the spine, muscle or nerve areas. About 85 percent of the patients got some relief from the injections, which helps relax muscle spasm. However, relief was not long-lasting and 62 patients needed surgery to correct the syndrome. Of those, 82 percent had a good or excellent result during the six-year follow-up. [View Article](#)

### Pennsylvania: Heroin Laced With Cyanide Sickens Trio

31 January - The Express-Times reported that police found about 30 bags of suspected heroin at an Easton residence after three men were hospitalized from reportedly using heroin mixed with [cyanide](#). The suspected heroin has a street value of about \$600, police Lt. Sam Lobb said. No one was at the residence and no one was arrested as of Sunday afternoon. The New Jersey Poison Control Center in Newark, NJ notified Easton, PA police that the three men reportedly used cyanide-tainted heroin, police Chief Stephen A. Mazzeo said. [View Article](#)

### Two Cases of Rare Sex Disease Are Diagnosed in New York

3 February – The New York Times reported that a rare sexually transmitted disease has been diagnosed in two local men, leading health officials to remind the public about practicing safe sex and to encourage doctors to be on the lookout for signs of the disease. The cases are among the first reported in the United States and match a strain of the disease that only began to surface in Europe in recent years. The disease, [lymphogranuloma venereum](#), known as LGV, is a rare form of chlamydia that can cause acute illness, lifelong disability and disfigurement as well as fuel the spread of H.I.V./AIDS through open sores. A majority of those infected, both in Europe and the United States, have been gay men who engage in anal intercourse. [View Article](#) (registration required)

### U.S. Petroleum Refiner Agrees to Cut Air Pollution

27 January – Health Day News reported that the largest U.S. domestic petroleum refiner has reached an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency to cut air pollution. The Clean Air Act settlement with ConocoPhillips is expected to reduce

[harmful air emissions](#) by more than 47,000 tons a year -- more than 37,100 tons of sulfur dioxide and more than 10,000 tons of nitrogen oxide. The agreement affects nine of the company's refineries in seven states, which represents almost 10 percent of the total refining capacity in the U.S. The company will also pay a \$4.5 million civil penalty and spend more than \$10 million on supplemental environmental projects to further reduce emissions. [View Article](#)

## U.S. to Expand Its Tracking of Radioactive Materials

1 February – The New York Times reported that the Bush administration intends to announce a significant expansion next month of federal efforts to monitor the importing of [radioactive material](#) and its movement around the country. They fear that the nation remains too vulnerable to a "dirty bomb" or nuclear weapon. The office for domestic nuclear detection, set up at the Department of Homeland Security, would coordinate a growing but fragmented network of radiation detection equipment. The security department has installed more than 400 radiation monitors in the past two years at ports, border crossings and post offices that handle international mail. The new federal office would coordinate research into new detection technologies, improve training on how to use them and help decide where to place them. If radioactive material is found, the office would also take charge of the federal response. [View Article](#) (registration required)

## USPACOM

### Bird Virus Kills First Cambodian Victims

2 February –The Times Online reported that [avian flu](#) has claimed human victims in Cambodia for the first time. A 25-year-old woman who died from the virus in southern Vietnam has been definitely linked to the H5N1 virus. She originally came from Kampot province, in Cambodia, and it now appears that last month her brother may also have died from the disease. She was admitted to hospital in the southern Vietnamese province of Kien Giang on Friday and died on Sunday. A doctor from the hospital said that her 14-year-old brother had died ten days earlier in Kampot. According to the Cambodia Daily, other members of the family are now suffering from high fevers and respiratory problems. Cambodia has not announced any outbreaks of flu among birds, and has never reported any human infections. [View Article](#)



## Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever in Timor-Leste - Update

3 February - The World Health Organization reported that as of 1 February, it has received reports of 95 cases of dengue infection and 11 deaths (case fatality ratio, 11.6%) from [acute hemorrhagic syndrome](#). Out of the 95 cases, 61 had clinical features compatible with dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) and 34 were diagnosed as suspected dengue fever (DF). Districts reporting DF/DHF cases are Baucau, Dili, Liquica, Maliana and Manatuto with 89.9% of the cases reported from Dili. The Ministry of Health, with the assistance of the WHO, is organizing a seminar for case management of dengue and DHF for clinicians and nurses. The WHO is providing support to the Dili National Hospital in the management of dengue and DHF and in targeting interventions in high-risk areas. Other control activities include assistance with vector control and health promotion. [View Article](#)

## Indian Ocean Earthquake & Tsunami Emergency Update

2 February – The Pacific Disaster Management Information Network reported that the death toll from the tsunamis is now 290,000 people with tens of thousands still unaccounted for, the . The United States and a number of other militaries and agencies are operating out of Thailand's Utapao Royal Thai Air Force Base. 1,600 US troops are on the ground. The US Combined Support Force 536 (CSF 536) may stand down by mid-February. The use of Utapao base will taper off this month as the US moves its efforts to its embassy and JUSMAG facility in Bangkok. WHO reports no disease outbreaks in the region, however, [malnutrition](#) is emerging as a concern in Indonesia. [View Article](#)

## Latest Avian Flu Cases in Vietnam

31 January - CIDRAP News reported that two Vietnamese girls died of [avian influenza](#) over the weekend. A 13-year-old girl and a 10-year-old girl became the 11th and 12th people to die of H5N1 avian flu in Vietnam since late December. State media reports said the girl and her mother had slaughtered an infected duck for a meal. The 10-year-old girl, who lived in the southern province of Long An reportedly had contact with dead chickens. Avian flu was also suspected in a 39-year-old man who died yesterday in the central Vietnam city of Da Nang. [View Article](#)

## Meningitis Alarm Rises as Deaths Grow to 16

1 February – English Eastday reported that China's Ministry of Health urged citizens and medical authorities yesterday to be on the alert for outbreaks of [bacterial meningitis](#) - a disease that has killed at least 16 people across China since mid-December. Most of those who died were students. Some 258 cases of meningitis were reported in January, 94 more than during the same month last year. The health ministry warned the public that epidemic meningitis and other infectious diseases can be easily spread during peak travel periods such as the Lunar New Year, which begins on February 9. [View Article](#)

### No Reports of Outbreak of any Diseases in Andamans

29 January – New Kerala reported that there are no reports of outbreak of any communicable diseases in the Andamans and Nicobar islands, said a team of doctors belonging to Health Disaster Management Foundation RESQ International, which carried out tsunami relief operations. The team leader said, "Fortunately there are no reports of any outbreak of any communicable diseases. But surveillance for communicable diseases should be continued at least till the end of the monsoon as the inmates of the camps will have to stay there for a much longer period." The team wanted the administration to provide sanitary facilities to all the camps by constructing temporary sanitary pit latrines to prevent outbreak of water borne and vector borne diseases. [View Article](#)

### Philippines -Typhoid Fever

2 February – ProMED reported that contaminated water sickened 39 residents of a barangay in Pasay City, triggering a probable outbreak of [typhoid fever](#) in the area. A spot examination of the water source of barangay 123 and its neighboring barangays showed that the residual chlorine level in the water supply was zero. The normal residual chlorine level is .2 to .5 mg/liter. The water company reportedly chlorinated the water source of the concerned barangays after health officials called the problem to the company's attention. [View Article](#)

### Post-Tsunami Rabies Outbreak Alarm in India, Sri Lanka

2 February – New Kerala reported that the threat of a [rabies](#) outbreak after the tsunami disaster has raised an alarm in the affected South Asian countries. A dog vaccination program has already been initiated in Sri Lanka following identification of an infected dog. There are no immediate signs of rabies in India and

Thailand. Animal welfare organizations fear that since the tsunami many dogs have been ownerless and they are now breeding with the already large population of stray street dogs. This means an increased threat of rabies spreading among the dogs and infecting people. [View Article](#)

## Tsunami Medical Brief Video

28 January - A presentation on post-disaster medical threats, The Tsunami Medical Brief, is now posted for bit streaming from the Center of Excellence for Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance website. Two versions are available, a lower quality that could be accessed from some handheld devices such as PDAs and cellular phones that support video, and a high quality that would be ideal for playback on a computer. [Go to Website](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Colombian Troops Battle Rebels – and Sand Flies

31 January – The Australian reported that [leishmaniasis](#), caused by sand-fly bites that produce nasty open sores and swelling, now forces more troops from the battlefield into hospitals than gunshots and mine blasts combined. It has hampered the army's unprecedented onslaught to wipe out the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. Caused by a parasite living in the sand fly's gut, the disease is found in parts of 88 countries, mostly tropical or subtropical. In Colombia, about 2,500 soldiers were hospitalized last year for leishmaniasis – up more than threefold from 2003 and more than double the 1150 injured in combat, Defence Ministry officials said. It usually takes about a month for soldiers, receiving daily injections to combat leishmaniasis, to recover. The guerrillas are also suffering, judging by the thousands of tubes of leishmaniasis medicine netted in raids on their camps last year. [View Article](#)